

# The THIRD DEGREE

A NARRATIVE OF METROPOLITAN LIFE

By CHARLES KLEIN AND ARTHUR HORNBLow

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAY WALTERS

## CHAPTER I.

"I'm N. G.—that's a cinch! The sooner I chuck it the better!"

Caught in the swirl of the busy city's midday rush, engulfed in Broadway's swift moving flood of hustling humanity, jostled unceremoniously by the careless, indifferent crowds, discouraged from stemming further the tide of pushing, elbowing men and women who hurried up and down the great thoroughfare, Howard Jeffries, tired and hungry and thoroughly disgusted with himself, stood still at the corner of Fulton street, cursing the luck which had brought him to his present plight.

It was the noon hour, the important time of day when nature loudly claims her due, when business affairs, no matter how pressing, must be temporarily interrupted so that the human machine may lay in a fresh store of nervous energy. From under the portals of precipitous office buildings, mammoth hives of human industries, which to right and left soared dizzily from street to sky, swarmed thousands of employees of both sexes—clerks, stenographers, shop girls, messenger boys—all moved by a common impulse to satisfy without further delay the animal cravings of their physical natures. They strode along with quick, nervous step, each chatting and laughing with his fellow, interested for the nonce in the day's work, making plans for well-earned recreation when five o'clock should come and the uptown stampede for Harlem and home begin.

The young man sullenly watched the scene, envious of the energy and activity of all about him. Each one in these hurrying throngs, he thought bitterly to himself, was a valuable unit in the prosperity and welfare of the big town. No matter how humble his or her position, each played a part in the business life of the great city, each was an unseen, unknown, yet indispensable cog in the whirling, complicated mechanism of the vast world metropolis. Intuitively he felt that he was not one of them, that he had no right even to consider himself their equal. He was utterly useless to anybody. He was without position or money. He was destitute even of a shred of self-respect. Hadn't he promised Annie not to touch liquor again before he found a job? Yet he had already imbibed all the whisky which the little money left in his pocket would buy.

Involuntarily, instinctively, he shrank back into the shadow of a doorway to let the crowds pass. The pavements were now filled to overflowing and each moment newcomers from the side streets came to swell the human stream. He tried to avoid observation, fearing that some one might recognize him, thinking all could read on his face that he was a sot, a self-confessed failure, one of life's incompetents. In his painful self-consciousness he believed himself the cynosure of every eye and he winced as he thought he detected on certain faces side glances of curiosity, commiseration and contempt.

Nor was he altogether mistaken. More than one passer-by turned to look in his direction, attracted by his peculiar appearance. His was a type not seen every day in the commercial district—the post-graduate college man out at elbows. He was smooth-faced and apparently about 25 years of age. His complexion was fair and his face refined. It would have been handsome but for a drooping, irresolute mouth, which denoted more than average weakness of character. The face was thin, chalk-like in its lack of color and deeply seamed with the tell-tale lines of dissipation. Dark circles under his eyes and a peculiar watery look suggested late hours and overindulgence for alcoholic refreshment. His clothes had the cut of expensive tailors, but they were shabby and needed pressing. His linen was soiled and his necktie disarranged. His whole appearance was careless and suggested that recklessness of mind which comes of general demoralization.

Howard Jeffries knew that he was a failure, yet like most young men mentally weak, he insisted that he could not be held altogether to blame. Secretly, too, he despised these sober, industrious people who seemed contented with the crumbs of comfort thrown to them. What, he wondered idly, was their secret of getting on? How were they able to lead such well regulated lives when he, starting out with far greater advantages, had failed? Oh, he knew well where the trouble lay—in his damnable weakness of character, his love for drink. That was responsible for everything. But was it his fault if he were born weak? These people who behaved themselves and got on, he sneered, were calm, commonplace temperaments who found no difficulty in controlling their baser instincts. They did right simply because they found it easier than to do wrong. Their virtue was nothing to brag about. It was easy to be good when not exposed to temptation. But for those born with the devil in them it came hard. It was all a matter of heredity

and influence. One's vice, as well as one's virtues are handed down to us ready made. He had no doubt that in the Jeffries family somewhere in the unsavory past there had been a weak, vicious ancestor from whom he had inherited all the traits which barred his way to success.

The crowds of hungry workers grew bigger every minute. Every one was elbowing his way into neighboring restaurants, crowding the tables and buffets, all eating voraciously as they talked and laughed. Howard was rudely reminded by inward pangs that he, too, was famished. Not a thing had passed his lips since he had left home in Harlem at eight o'clock that morning and he had told Annie that he would be home for lunch. There was no use staying downtown any longer. For three weary hours he had trudged from office to office seeking employment, answering advertisements, asking for work of any kind, ready to do no matter what, but all to no purpose. Nobody wanted him at any price. What was the good of a man being willing to work if there was no one to employ him? A nice look-out certainly. Hardly a dollar left and no prospect of getting any more. He hardly had the courage to return home and face Annie. With a muttered exclamation of impatience he spat from his mouth the half-consumed cigarette which was hanging from his lip, and crossing Broadway, walked listlessly in the direction of Park place.

He had certainly made a mess of things, yet at one time, not so long ago, what a brilliant future life seemed to have in store for him! No boy had ever been given a better start. He remembered the day he left home to go to Yale; he recalled his father's kind words of encouragement, his mother's tears. Ah, if his mother had only lived! Then, maybe, everything would have been different. But she died during his freshman year, carried off suddenly by heart failure. His father married again, a young woman 20 years his junior, and that had started everything off wrong. The old home life had gone forever. He had felt like an intruder the first time he went home and from that day his father's roof had been distasteful to him. Yes, that was the beginning of his hard luck. He could trace all his misfortunes back to that. He couldn't stand for stepmother, a haughty, selfish, supercilious, ambitious creature who had little sympathy for her predecessor's child, and no scruple in showing it.

Then, at college, he had met Robert Underwood, the popular upper classman, who had professed to take a great fancy to him. He, a timid young freshman, was naturally flattered by the friendship of the dashing, fascinating sophomore and thus commenced that unfortunate intimacy which had brought about the climax to his troubles. The suave, amiable Underwood, whom he soon discovered to be a gentlemanly scoundrel, borrowed his money and introduced him into the "sporty" set, an exclusive circle into which, thanks to his liberal allowance from home, he was welcomed with open arms. With a youth of his privileges and inherent weakness the outcome was inevitable. At no time overfond of study, he regarded residence in college as a most desirable emancipation from the restraint of



He Was a Type Not Seen Every Day in the Commercial District.

home life. The love of books he considered a pose and he scoffed at the men who took their reading seriously. The university attracted him mostly by its most undesirable features, its sports, its secret societies, its petty cliques, and its rowdiness. The broad spirit and the dignity of the alma mater he ignored completely. Directly he went to Yale he started in to enjoy himself and with the sophisticated Underwood as guide, went to the devil faster than any man before him in the entire history of the university. Reading, attendance at lectures, became only a convenient cloak to conceal his turpitudes. Poker playing, automobile joy rides, hard drinking became the daily curriculum. In town rows and orgies of every description he was soon a recognized leader.

## How Circumstances Often Convict the Innocent

Scandal followed scandal until he was threatened with expulsion. Then his father heard of it and there was a terrible scene. Jeffries, Sr., went immediately to New Haven and there followed a stormy interview in which Howard promised to reform, but once the parent's back was turned things went on pretty much as before. There were fresh scandals, the smoke of which reached as far as New York. This time Mr. Jeffries tried the plan of cutting down the money supply and Howard found himself financially embarrassed. But this had not quite the effect desired by the father, for, rendered desperate by his inability to secure funds with which to carry on his spree, the young man started in to gamble heavily, giving notes for his losses and pocketing the ready money when he won.

Then came the supreme scandal which turned his father's heart to steel. Jeffries, Sr., could forgive much in a young man. He had been young himself once. None knew better than he how difficult it is when the blood is rich and red to keep oneself in control. But there was one offense which a man proud of his descent could not condone. He would never forgive the staining of the family name by a degrading marriage. The news came to the unhappy father like a thunder-clap. Howard, probably in a drunken spree, had married secretly a waitress employed in one of the "sporty" restaurants in New Haven, and to make the mesalliance worse, the girl was not even of respectable parents. Her father, Billy Delmore, the poolroom king, was a notorious gambler and had died in convict stripes. Fine sensation that for the yellow press. "Banker's Son Weds Convict's Daughter." So ran the "scare heads" in the newspapers. That was the last straw for Mr. Jeffries, Sr. He sternly told his son that he never wanted to look upon his face again. Howard bowed his head to the decree and he had never seen his father since.

All this the young man was reviewing in his mind when suddenly his reflections were disturbed by a friendly hail.

"Hello, Jeffries, old sport! Don't you know a fellow frat when you see him?"

He looked up. A young man of athletic build, with a pleasant, frank face, was standing at the news stand under the Park place elevated station. Quickly Howard extended his hand.

"Hello, Cox!" he exclaimed. "What on earth are you doing in New York? Whoever would have expected to meet you in this howling wilderness? How's everything at Yale?"

The athlete grinned.

"Yale be hanged! I don't care a d—n. You know I graduated last June. I'm in business now—in a broker's office in Wall street. Say, it's great! We had a semi-panic last week. Prices went to the devil. Stocks broke 20 points. You should have seen the excitement on the exchange floor. Our football rushes were nothing to it. I tell you, it's great. It's got college beaten to a frazzle!" Quickly he added: "What are you doing?"

Howard averted his eyes and hung his head.

"Nothing," he answered gloomily.

Coxe had quickly taken note of his former classmate's shabby appearance. He had also heard of his escapades.

"Didn't you hear?" muttered Howard. "Row with governor, marriage and all that sort of thing? Of course," he went on, "father's damnably unjust, actuated by absurd prejudice. Annie's a good girl and a good wife, no matter what her father was. D—n it, this is a free country! A man can marry whom he likes. All these ideas about family pride and family honor are old world notions, foreign to this soil. I'm not going to give up Annie to please any one. I'm as fond of her now as ever. I haven't regretted a moment that I married her. Of course, it has been hard. Father at once shut down money supplies, making my further stay at Yale impossible, and I was forced to come to New York to seek employment. We've managed to fix up a small flat in Harlem and now, like Micawber, I'm waiting for something to turn up."

Coxe nodded sympathetically.

"Come and have a drink," he said cheerily.

Howard hesitated. Once more he remembered his promise to Annie, but as long as he had broken it once he would get no credit for refusing now. He was horribly thirsty and depressed. Another drink would cheer him up. It seemed even wicked to decline when it wouldn't cost him anything.

They entered a bar conveniently close at hand, and with a tremulous hand Howard carried greedily to his lips the insidious liquor which had undermined his health and stolen away his manhood.

"Have another?" said Coxe with a smile as he saw the glass emptied at a gulp.

"I don't care if I do," replied Howard. Secretly ashamed of his weak-

ness, he shuffled uneasily on his feet.

"Well, what are you going to do, old man?" demanded Coxe as he pushed the whisky bottle over.

"I'm looking for a job," stammered Howard awkwardly. Hastily he went on: "It isn't so easy. If it was only myself I wouldn't mind. I'd get along somehow. But there's the little girl. She wants to go to work, and I won't bear of it. I couldn't stand for that, you know."

Coxe feared a "touch." Awkwardly he said:

"I wish I could help you, old man. As it is, my own salary barely serves to keep me in neckwear. Wall street's great fun, but it doesn't pay much; that is, not unless you play the game yourself."

Howard smiled feebly as he replied:

"Nonsense—I wouldn't accept help of that sort. I'm not reduced to soliciting charity yet. I guess I'd prefer the river to that. But if you hear of anything, keep me in mind."

The athlete made no response. He was apparently lost in thought when suddenly he blurted out:

"Say, Jeffries, you haven't got any money, have you—say, a couple of thousand dollars?"

Howard stared at the questioner as if he doubted his sanity.

"Two thousand dollars!" he gasped. "Do you suppose that I'd be wearing out shoe leather looking for a job, if I had \$2,000?"

Coxe looked disappointed as he replied:

"Oh, of course, I understand you haven't it on you, only I thought you might be able to raise it."

"Why do you ask?" inquired Howard, his curiosity aroused.

Coxe looked around to see if any one was listening. Then in a whisper he said:

"It's a cinch. If you had \$2,000, you and I could make a snug little fortune. Don't you understand? In my office I get tips. I'm on the inside. I know in advance what the big men are going to do. When they start to move a certain stock up, I'm on the job. Understand? If you had \$2,000, I could raise as much, and we'd pool our capital, starting in the business ourselves—on a small scale, of course. If we hit it right we might make a nice income."

Howard's mouth watered. Certainly that was the kind of life he liked best. The feverish excitement of gambling, the close association with rich men, the promise of a luxurious style of living—all this appealed to him strongly. But what was the use? Where could he get \$2,000? He couldn't go to his father. He shook his head.

"I'm afraid not, old sport," he said as they left the saloon and he held out his hand to say good-by. "But I'll bear it in mind, and if things improve, I'll look you up. So long!"

Climbing wearily up the dirty stairs of the elevated railroad, he bought a ticket with one of the few nickels remaining in his pocket, and taking a seat in a north-bound train started on his trip back to Harlem.

The day was overcast, rain threatened. A pall of mingled smoke and mist hung over the entire city. From the car window as the train wound its serpentine course in and out the maze of grimy offices, shops and tenements, everything appeared drab, dirty and squalid. New York was seen at its ugliest. Ensnared in a cross-seat, his chin leaning heavily on his hand, Howard gazed dejectedly out of the window. The depressing outlook was in keeping with his own state of mind.

How would the adventure end? Reconciliation with his father was out of the question. Letters sent home remained without response. He wasn't surprised. He knew his pater too well to expect that he would relent so soon. Besides, if the old man was so infernally proud, he'd show him he had some pride, too. He'd drown himself before he'd go down on his knees, whining to be forgiven. His father was dead wrong, anyway. His marriage might have been foolish; Annie might be beneath him socially. She was not educated and her father wasn't any better than he ought to be. She did not talk correctly, her manners left much to be desired, at times he was secretly ashamed of her. But her bringing up was her misfortune, not her fault. The girl herself was straight as a die. She had a heart of gold. She was far more intelligent, far more likely to make him a happy home than some stuck-up, idle society girl who had no thought for anything save money, dress and show. Perhaps if he had been less honorable and not married her, his father would have thought more highly of him. If he'd ruined the girl, no doubt he would have been welcomed home with open arms. Pahaw! He might be a poor, weak fool, but thank God, they couldn't reproach him with that. Annie had been loyal to him throughout. He'd stick to her through thick and thin.

As the train swept round the curve at Fifty-third street and started on its long, straight run up the West side, his mind reverted to Robert Under-

## The Herald's New Serial Story

### Sins Of Society Laid Bare

Police Crookedness and Money's Power Play Important Parts

wood. He had seen his old associate only once since leaving college. He ran across him one day on Fifth avenue. Underwood was coming out of a curio shop. He explained hurriedly that he had left Yale, and when asked about his future plans talked vaguely of going in for art. His matter was frigid and nervous—the attitude of the man who fears he may be approached for a small loan. He was evidently well aware of the change in his old associate's fortunes, and having squeezed all he could out of him, had no further use for him. It was only when he had disappeared that Howard suddenly remembered a loan of \$250 which Underwood had never repaid. Some time later Howard learned that he occupied apartments at the exclusive and expensive Astoria, where he was living in great style. He went there determined to see him and demand his money, but the card always came back "not at home."

Underwood had always been a mystery to Howard. He knew him to be an inveterate gambler and a man entirely without principle. No one knew who his family were or where he came from. His source of income, too, was always a puzzle. At college he was always hard up, borrowing right and left and forgetting to pay, yet he always succeeded in living on the fat of the land. His apartments in the Astoria cost a small fortune; he dressed well, drove a smart turnout and entertained lavishly. He was not identified with any particular business or profession. On leaving college he became interested in art. He frequented the important art sales and soon got his name in the newspapers as an authority on art matters. His apartment was literally a museum of European and oriental art. On all sides were paintings by old masters, beautiful rugs, priceless tapestries, rare ceramics, enamel, statuary, antique furniture, bronzes, etc. He passed for a man of wealth, and mothers with marriageable daughters, considering him an eligible young bachelor, hastened to invite him to their homes, none of them conscious of the danger of letting the wolf slip into the lambs' fold.

What a strange power of fascination, mused Howard as the train jogged along, men of Underwood's bold and reckless type wield, especially over women. Their very daring and unscrupulousness seems to render



"I Wish I Could Help You, Old Man."

them more attractive. He himself at college had fallen entirely under the man's spell. There was no doubt that he was responsible for all his troubles. Underwood possessed the uncanny gift of being able to bend people to his will. What a fool he had made of him at the university! He had been his evil genius, there was no question of that. But for meeting Underwood he might have applied himself to serious study, left the university with honors and been now a respectable member of the community. He remembered with a smile that it was through Underwood that he had met his wife. Some of the fellows hinted that Underwood had known her more intimately than he had pretended and had only passed her on to him because he was tired of her. He had nailed that as a lie. Annie, he could swear, was as good a girl as ever breathed.

He couldn't explain Underwood's influence over him. He had done with him what he chose. He wondered why he had not tried to resist. The truth was Underwood exercised a strange, subtle power over him. He had the power to make him do everything he wanted him to do, no matter how foolish or unreasonable the request. Every one at college used to talk about it. One night Underwood invited all his classmates to his rooms and made him cut up all kinds of capers. He at first refused, point blank—but Underwood got up and, standing directly in front of him, gazed steadily into his eyes. Again he commanded him to do these ridiculous, degrading things. Howard felt himself weakening. He was suddenly seized with the feeling that he must obey. Amid roars of laughter he recited the entire alphabet standing on one leg, he crawled like a rooster, he hopped like a toad, and he crawled abjectly on his belly like a snake. One of the fellows told him

afterward that he had been hypnotized. He had laughed at it then as a good joke, but now he came to think of it, perhaps it was true. Possibly he was a subject. Anyway he was glad to be rid of Underwood and his uncanny influence.

The train stopped with a jerk at his station and Howard rode down in the elevator to the street. Crossing Eighth avenue, he was going straight home when suddenly he halted. The glitter and tempting array of bottles in a corner saloon window tempted him. He suddenly felt that if there was one thing he needed in the world above all others it was another drink. True, he had had more than enough already. But that was Coxe's fault. He had invited him and made him drink. There couldn't be any harm in taking another. He might as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb. By the time he emerged from the saloon his speech was thick and his step uncertain. A few minutes later he was painfully climbing up the rickety stairs of a cheap-looking flat house. As he reached the top floor a cheerful voice called out:

"Is that you, Howard, dear?"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

## UNIONS TAKE A RAP AT ALIEN LABOR IMPORTATIONS AT EL PASO

State Federation of Labor Adopts a Protest Against Number of Men Brought in Here.

Henry M. Walker and Julius A. Moelich have returned from Galveston, where they represented the El Paso unions in the convention of the state federation of labor. Moelich was elected a vice president of the state body.

Mr. Walker says the convention was considerably aroused over the way Mexican labor is brought in at El Paso and that the resolutions committee brought in a resolution which was unanimously adopted, taking a pretty hot shot at the practice. The resolution, as he copied it, follows:

"Whereas, At the El Paso port of entry there is practically no attention paid to the admission of Mexico's peons, who are entering the United States at the rate of more than 1000 per month, many of whom are partially skilled as musicians, carpenters, painters, tinners, etc., who are displacing home and citizen labor at less than living wages, according to the American standard of living, and

"Whereas, At the El Paso port of entry, building contractors, railroad agents and labor agents, have sub agents in Old Mexico, bringing this pauper class to this country, and it appears that practically no efforts are being put forth by the agents of the United States bureau of immigration to prevent such undesirable wholesale admission;

"Therefore, Be it resolved, That the Texas State federation of labor does hereby enter its solemn and sincere protest against such action and the secretary-treasurer is hereby instructed to

## NEWEST STYLE IN ELECTIONEERING

Politicians Now Pass Out Cards That Are Currency in the Town.

This card is good in any store. Or bar as legal tender. One five-cent drink or smoke, no more. 'Twill buy from any vender. (OVER)

When the voter gets a card inscribed as above and turns it over he will read:

VOTE FOR

Candidate for Renomination for Justice of the Peace, Central Township.

This is the latest scheme of the politician. It has been inaugurated in St. Louis and, El Paso always up-to-date, may be expected to fall immediately in line. If the school board candidates do not adopt the new wrinkle in political fashions, the ordinary office-seekers may do so before the primaries next summer.

And why not? It saves the politician several jags and a lot of time, for he can give a man a drink or a smoke and not have to stop and take one himself, or he can pass a man, hand out a card and go on his way with the certain knowledge that the card is not going to be thrown away immediately and that the voter will give him at least another thought.

But to make sure, the politician might like to go at least for a dime, for the man who gets a nickel cigar from a politician is more than likely to vote for the other fellow. With beer it is different; a nickel drink is all right, but the cards will have to be changed in regard to the smoke nuisance.

## BISHOP OF DIOCESE TO BE GUEST OF CATHOLICS

St. Rev. E. J. Dunn, bishop of the local Roman Catholic diocese, is expected to arrive here Thursday. Bishop Dunn will confirm a number of classes while in the city, and probably will be entertained by local Knights of Columbus.

BELL PHONE 116

Will sell anything you have to sell.

## ABOUT FOREIGN MADE ARTICLES

Treasury Department Makes Another Ruling About Dutiable Stuff.

A supplementary order to the recent ruling by the treasury department, relative to the importation of merchandise by tourists has been issued.

A form of declaration and entry has been adopted for use at frontier ports by all residents of the United States returning from contiguous foreign territory, and having in their possession articles of \$10 in value, purchased or acquired abroad.

Articles purchased or acquired by residents of the United States while abroad to the value of \$100, in the nature of wearing apparel, articles of adornment, toilet articles and similar personal effects, may be passed free of duty under the exemption clause, the new ruling states. If the particular article is "necessary and appropriate for the purpose of the journey."

Articles purchased in contiguous territory by persons living near the boundary line, or making short or infrequent trips into foreign territory, cannot be considered as necessary and appropriate for the purpose of the journey. It is also stated in the last ruling by the department.

## STOMACH LIVER LUNGS

Each of the chief organs of the body is a link in the Chain of Life. A chain is so stronger than its weakest link, the body no stronger than its weakest organ. If there is weakness of stomach, liver or lungs, there is a weak link in the chain of life which may snap at any time. Often this so-called "weakness" is caused by lack of nutrition, the result of weakness or disease of the stomach and other organs of digestion and nutrition. Diseases and weaknesses of the stomach and its allied organs are cured by the use of Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery. When the weak or diseased stomach is cured, diseases of other organs which seem remote from the stomach but which have their origin in a diseased condition of the stomach and other organs of digestion and nutrition, are cured also.

The strong man has a strong stomach. Take the above recommended "Discovery" and you may have a strong stomach and a strong body.

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Address Dr. R. V. Pierce, Buffalo, N. Y.

## Fortunatus Questions His Daddy

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Because, Fortunatus, they fit perfectly, do not hurt the soft tissues, easily kept clean, are light and when you eat you can taste with them, and 100 more reasons.

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I DON'T WOR FOR NEGROES

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